

# **CAMOUFLAGED UNIFORMS OF THE WAFFEN S.S.**

**Part one.**

**J. Borsarello**

**D. Lassus**



**ISO-GALAGO PUBLICATIONS**





## WAFFEN SS CAMOUFLAGE..

Part One.

Oak Leaf and Plane Tree  
patterns.

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Cover Photo courtesy Louis  
Leguen shows a tanker suit in  
Plane Tree pattern, summer side.

Rear Cover Photo.

Left: See caption photos 10/11.

Right: Plane Tree pattern,  
winter side.

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**CAMOUFLAGED UNIFORMS  
OF THE WAFFEN S.S.**

**J. Borsarello**

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**Part one.**

**Oak leaf patterns A&B**

**Plane tree patterns Nos.1-6.**

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Photo 1. Oak Leaf Pattern A. drillich (drill) material. Two piece suit for SS tank crew.



# CAMOUFLAGED UNIFORMS OF THE WAFFEN S.S.

Under the inspiration of Stein and Hausser the Waffen SS troops experimented with special camouflaged patterns during 1937. Initially research was conducted into patterns for helmet covers and poncho quartershelters. The patterns selected by the Waffen SS were quite different to those being developed by the Wehrmacht in 1937-8. Three principal designs were developed. The first pattern is based on stylised oak leaves with the design pattern being repeated every 50 cm. The second pattern is a softer design with the edges diffused as if a printing error. This pattern was very effective in swampy and marshy country. Here again the pattern is repeated every 50 cm, due to the print rolls being 16 cm in diameter. The third pattern is more complicated and needs a double printing - one a background printing with the basic design 50 cms apart, and one with special black spots and spaces with the design repeating every 8 metres. This second printing is not made by rolls, but with a large metal screen which closes like a book and prints the design on a material of 8 metres. The design takes the full 8 metres and it is cut to produce the poncho or field blouse. (See centre pages).

## OAK LEAF PATTERN

All Oak Leaf Patterns are reversable. Summer one side, Winter the other.



Pattern A. early and late. Small spots have thick edge.



Pattern B. early and late. Small spots have thin edge.

Pattern C. early and late. Autumn side is orange.

Early patterns have a background as per this pattern

Later patterns have a background of Oak Leaf Model A.

Items made up of camouflaged stock are as follows :-

Quartershelters (Zeltbahn), Field Blouses (Tarnjacke), Heavy Padded Suit (Tarn Parke), Helmet Covers, Forage Visor Caps, Winter Gloves and Hoods.

Non-regulation items made up of camouflaged stock :- Service Jackets, Trousers, Aprons.

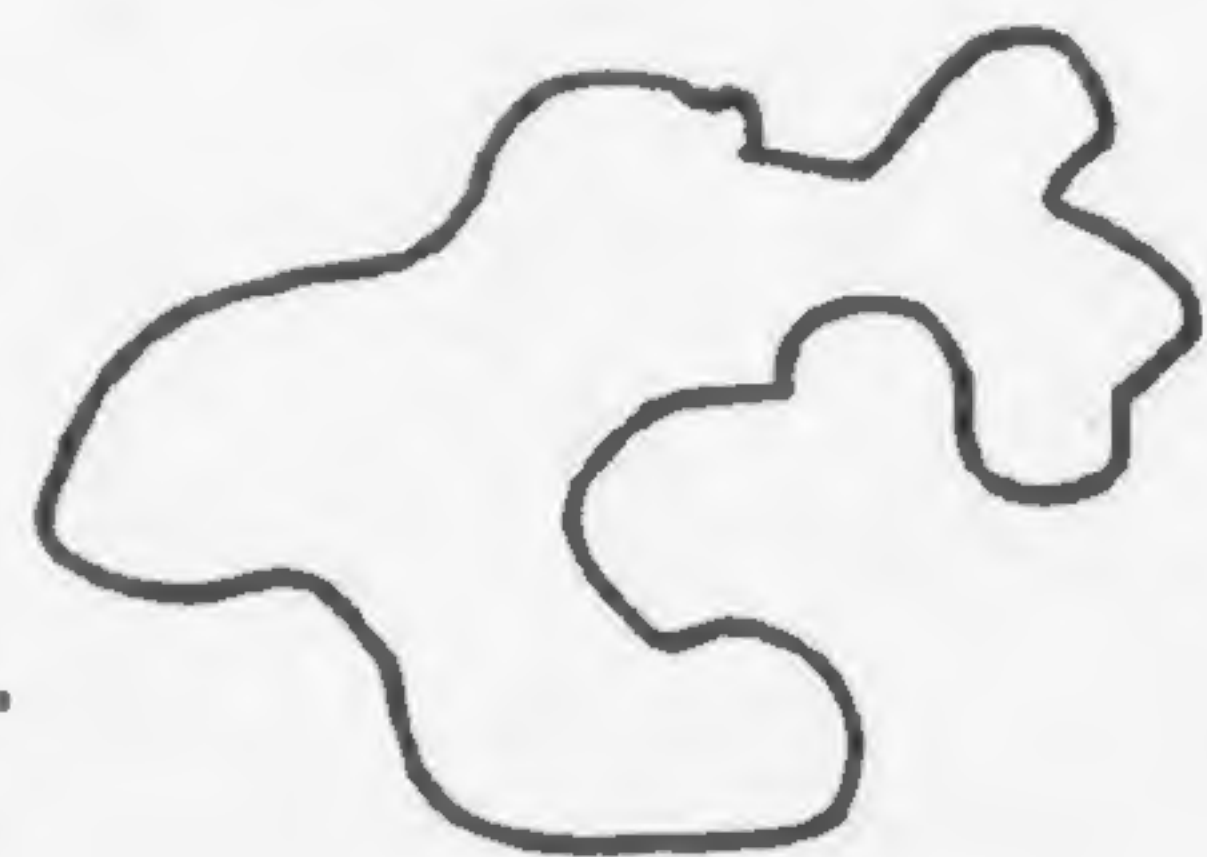






Photo 2. Oak Leaf Pattern B. Brown dominant winter side of Field Blouse.



Photo 3. Oak Leaf Pattern A. Brown dominant winter side. Heavyweight material.





Photo 4. Oak Leaf Pattern B. Brown dominant winter side. Reverse of Field Blouse summer.



Photo 5. For comparison, a poncho in Plane Tree No 2 pattern.





6

Photo 6. Oak Leaf Pattern A. Green dominant. Heavy padded suit for the Russian Spring.

Photo 7. Oak Leaf Pattern A. Summer side.

Photo 8. Oak Leaf Pattern A (left) Summer.

7

8







Photo 9. Oak Leaf Pattern B. Winter colours. Heavy padded gloves.



Photo 10. For comparison, a poncho in Plane Tree No 6 pattern.

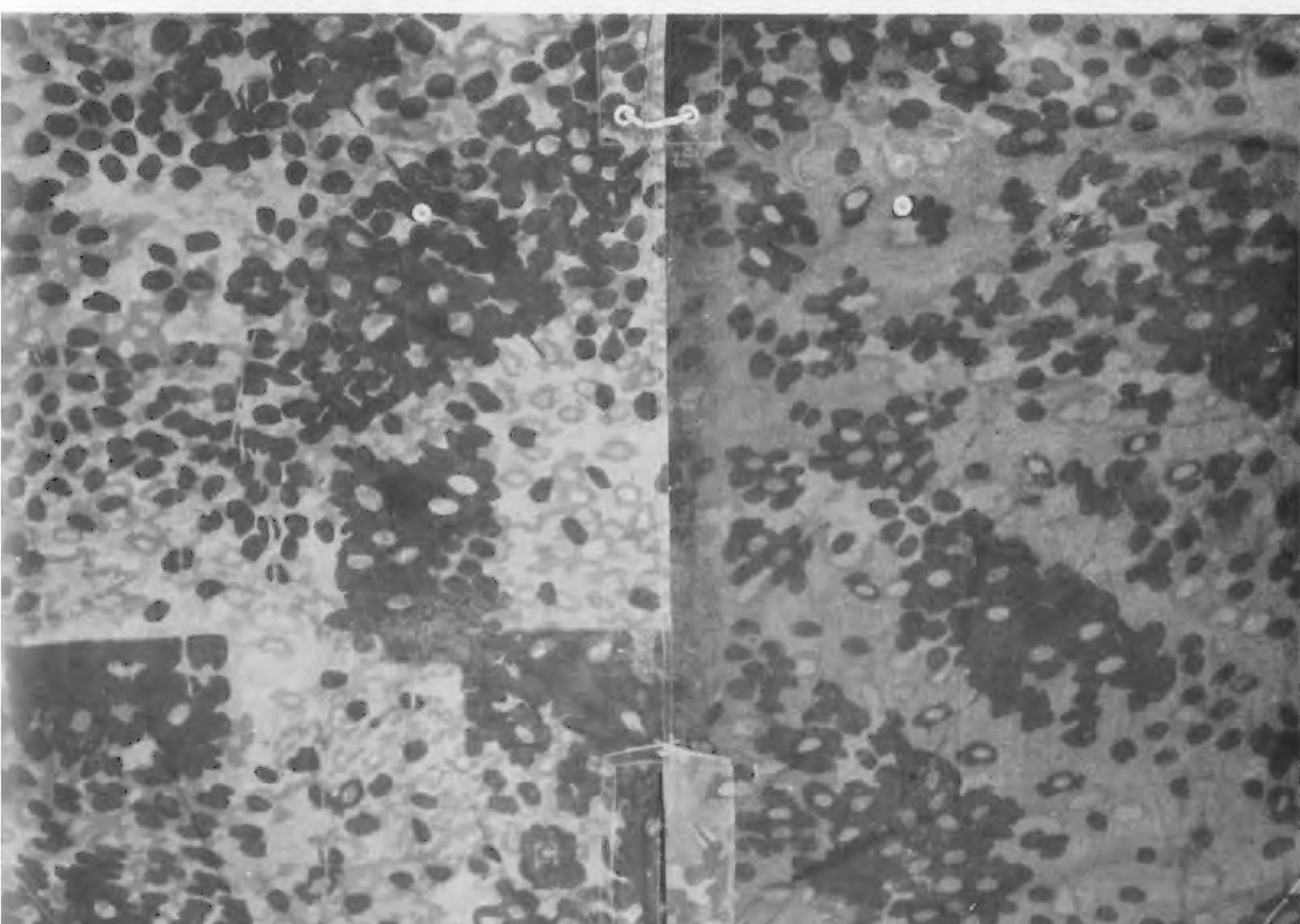


Photo 11. The problems of recognising patterns is further illustrated by this example of Plane Tree patterns badly printed by PoWs which should represent No 4 pattern (left) and No 6 (right).



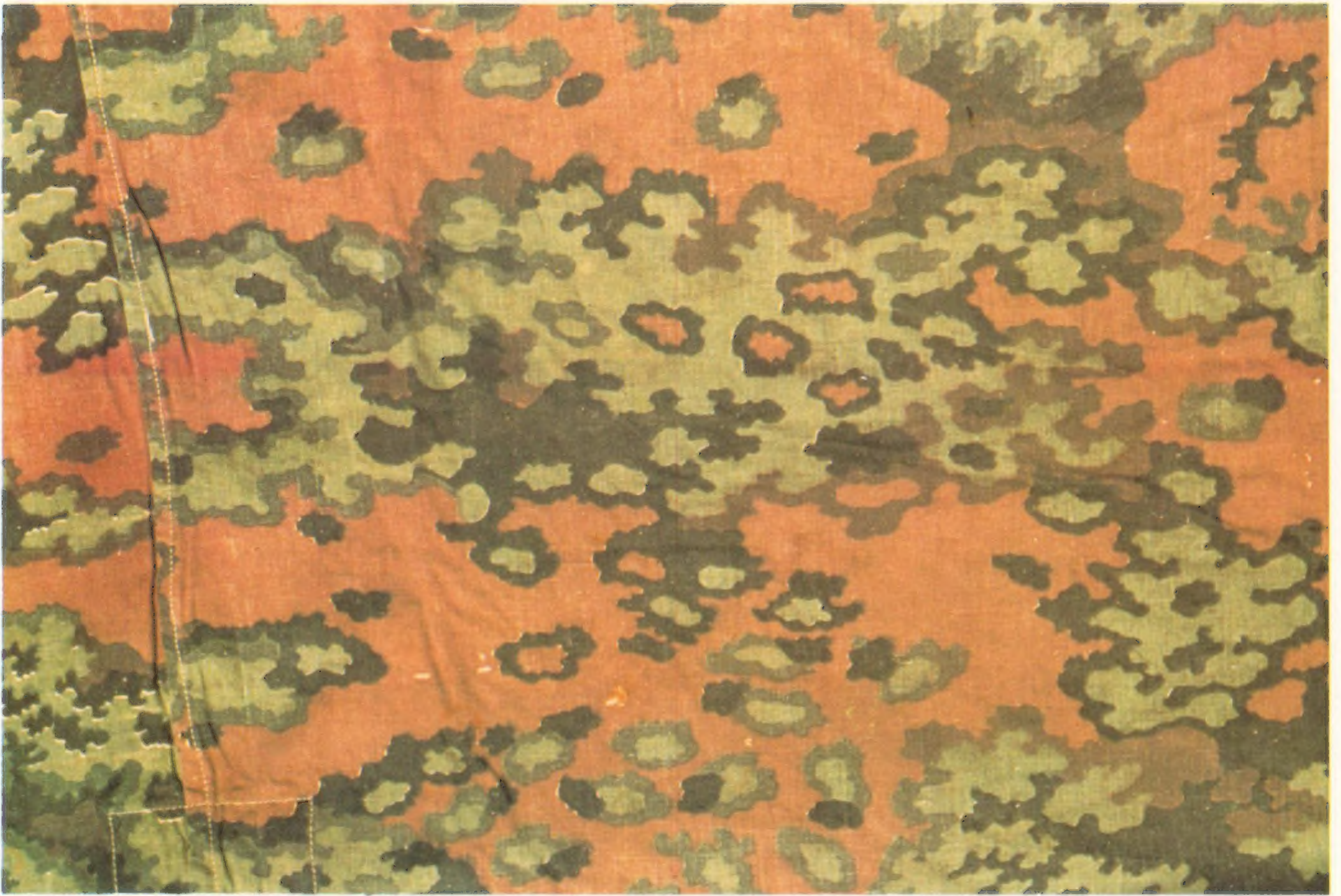


Photo 12. Oak Leaf Pattern A. Summer.



Photo 13. Oak Leaf Pattern A. Winter. Note the small spots with thicker edges.



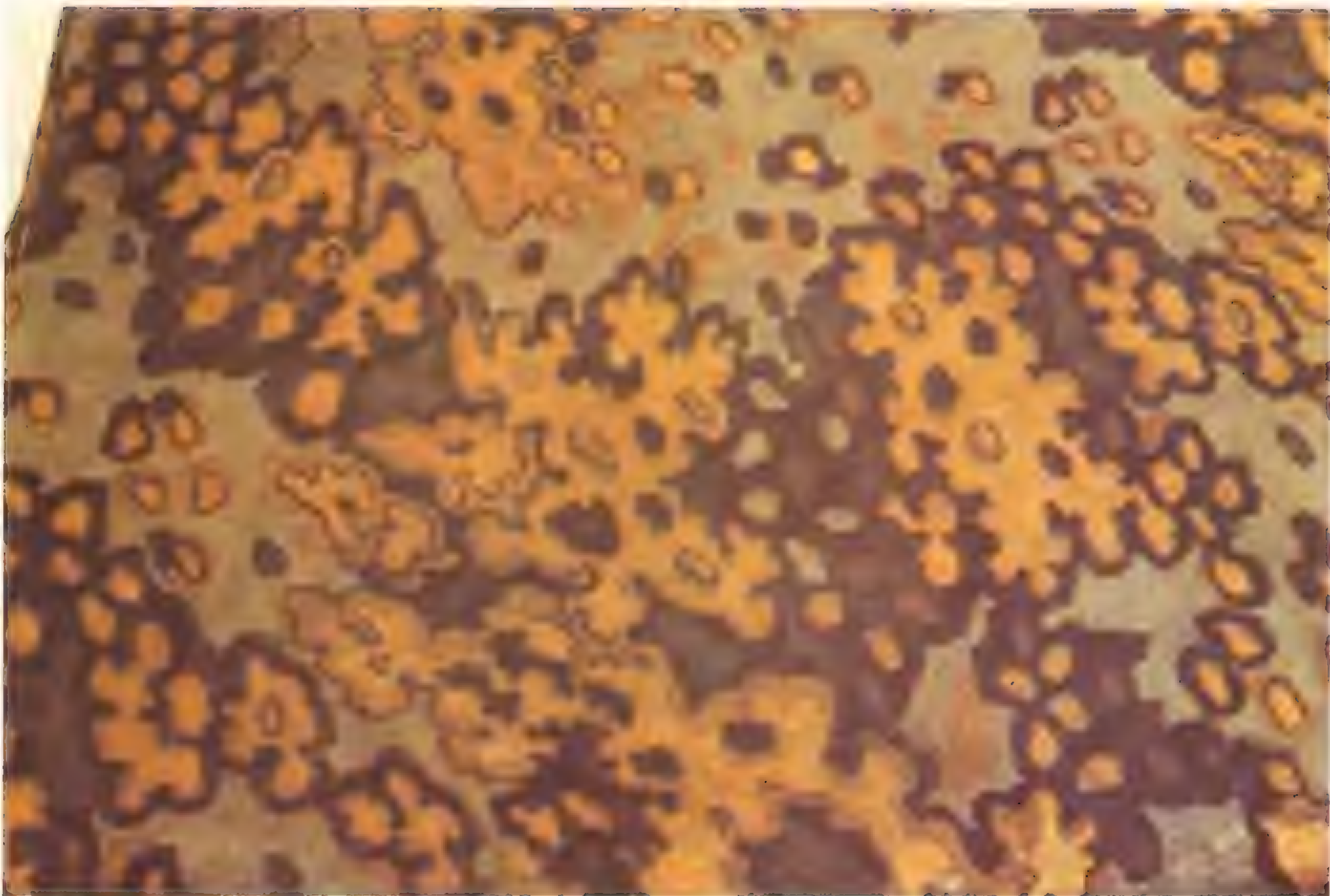


Photo 14. Oak Leaf Pattern B. Summer



Photo 15. Oak Leaf Pattern B. Winter. This is Variant Orange with very orange oak leaves and violet background.





Photo 16. Two Oak Leaf Pattern A together. Left: the winter pattern and right the summer pattern. These are both heavily padded parkas, the summer parka being used in the Russian Spring.





Photo 17. Oak Leaf Pattern A. Helmet Cover. Note the lateral hooks.



Photo 18. Oak Leaf Pattern B. Helmet Cover. Note hooks missing and Field Blouse oak leaf.





Photo 19. Oak Leaf Pattern B. Summer.  
Produced on drill material (drilllich).



Photo 20. Oak Leaf Pattern B. Winter.  
Heavy winter parka. Reverse side white.



# PLANE TREE PATTERN

## PLANE TREE PATTERNS

These are numbered No 1 to No 6.

Nos 1 to 4 early and late patterns. First printing with basic design.

Second printing large holes and spots.

These are reversible designs for Winter and Summer.

Nos 5 and 6 early and late patterns. Different sized spots. Half flowers and corolla very characteristic. Early patterns have characteristic drawing, later patterns have Oak Leaf backgrounds.



PLANE TREE Nos 1-6. The Plane Tree pattern is composed of a background with round designs (early type) or oak leaves (later type). The background colour is ocre pink. On a second printing in black, holes and digitalised drawings are imposed. This second printing transforms the single oak leaf pattern into the Plane Tree pattern. It is very important to realise that although in the 1980's all world armies have added 0.4% carbon black to deceive detection by infra-red devices that these large black spots on the German camouflage of the 1930s could well have been the preceptor.

Photo 21. Plane Tree pattern. This Wehrmacht Officer wears a Waffen SS Field Blouse.



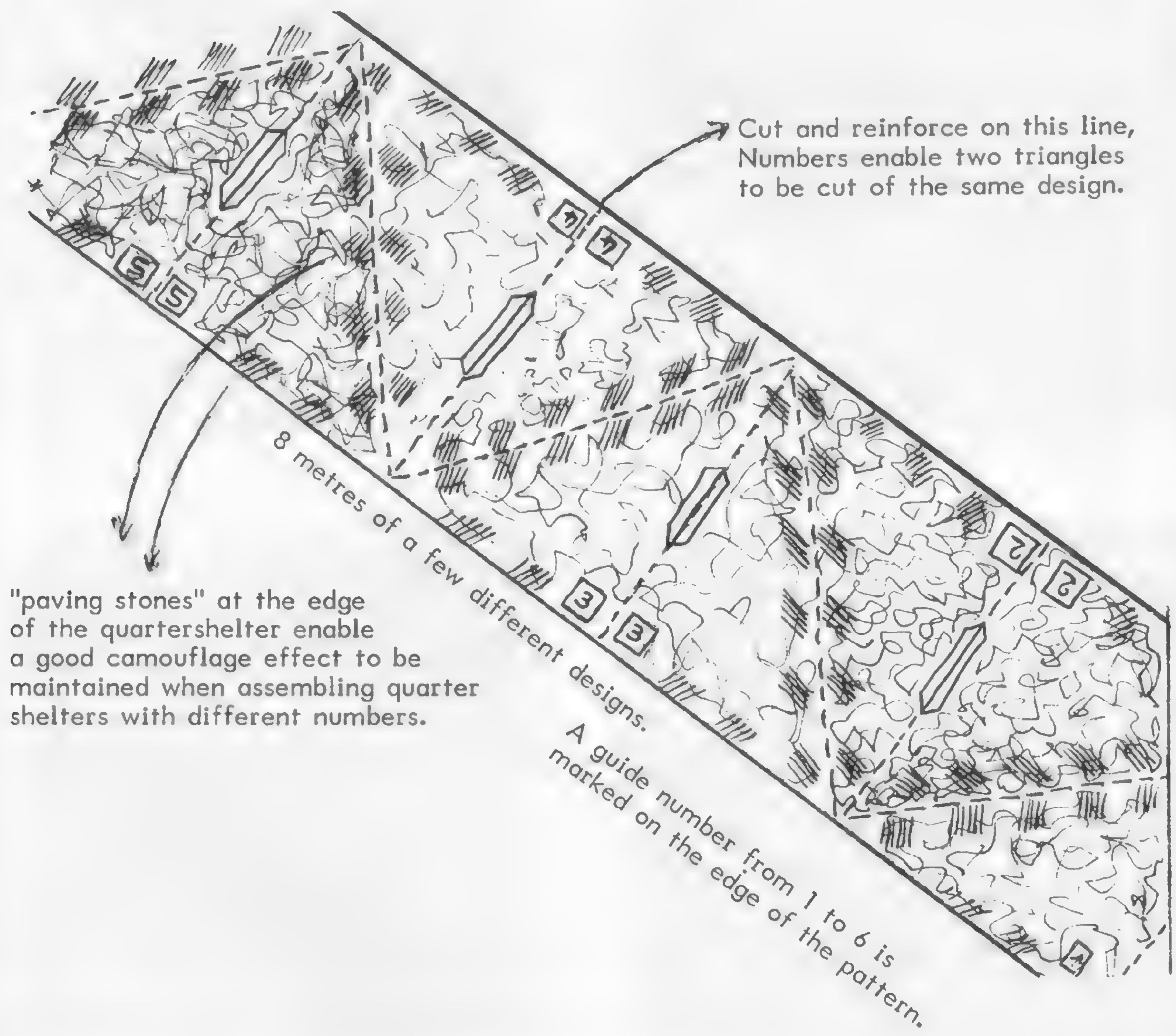


Photo 22. Plane Tree Pattern Nos 2 and 6. Note the effect of buttoning two quarters of this design together. On the left is the No2 pattern with a No6 on the right. By arranging the patterns so that black blocks of each blend effectively an excellent camouflage may be maintained.

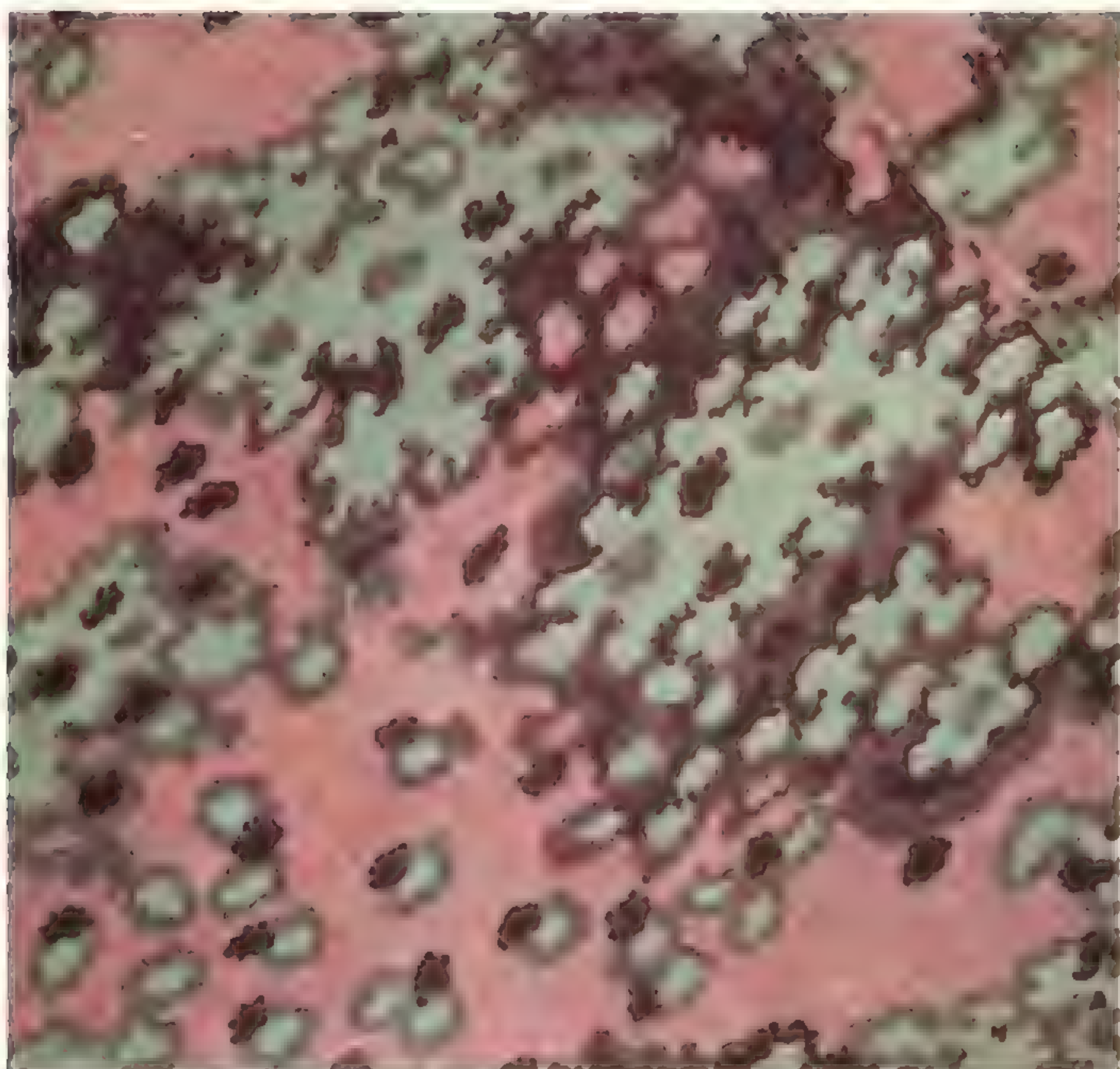


# LAYOUT FOR PONCHO

To make a poncho a triangle is cut 250 cm base and 190 cm high. This triangle is cut in the centre to allow the head through when used as a poncho. Two triangles are needed for strength, and care must be taken to use identical pattern sections to maintain the camouflage effect. To prevent such mistakes a number was printed along the base of the design. When assembling the left and right pieces it was necessary to check that they had identical numbers from 1 to 6. With the eight metre design it was only possible to make six ponchos. This is the reason why certain quarter shelters have two little numbers in the middle of the base of the triangle. Each pattern is reversible and is green dominant for Spring/Summer on one side and brown dominant for Autumn/Winter on the other side.







OAK LEAF A SUMMER



OAK LEAF A WINTER



OAK LEAF B SUMMER



OAK LEAF A VARIANT ORANGE

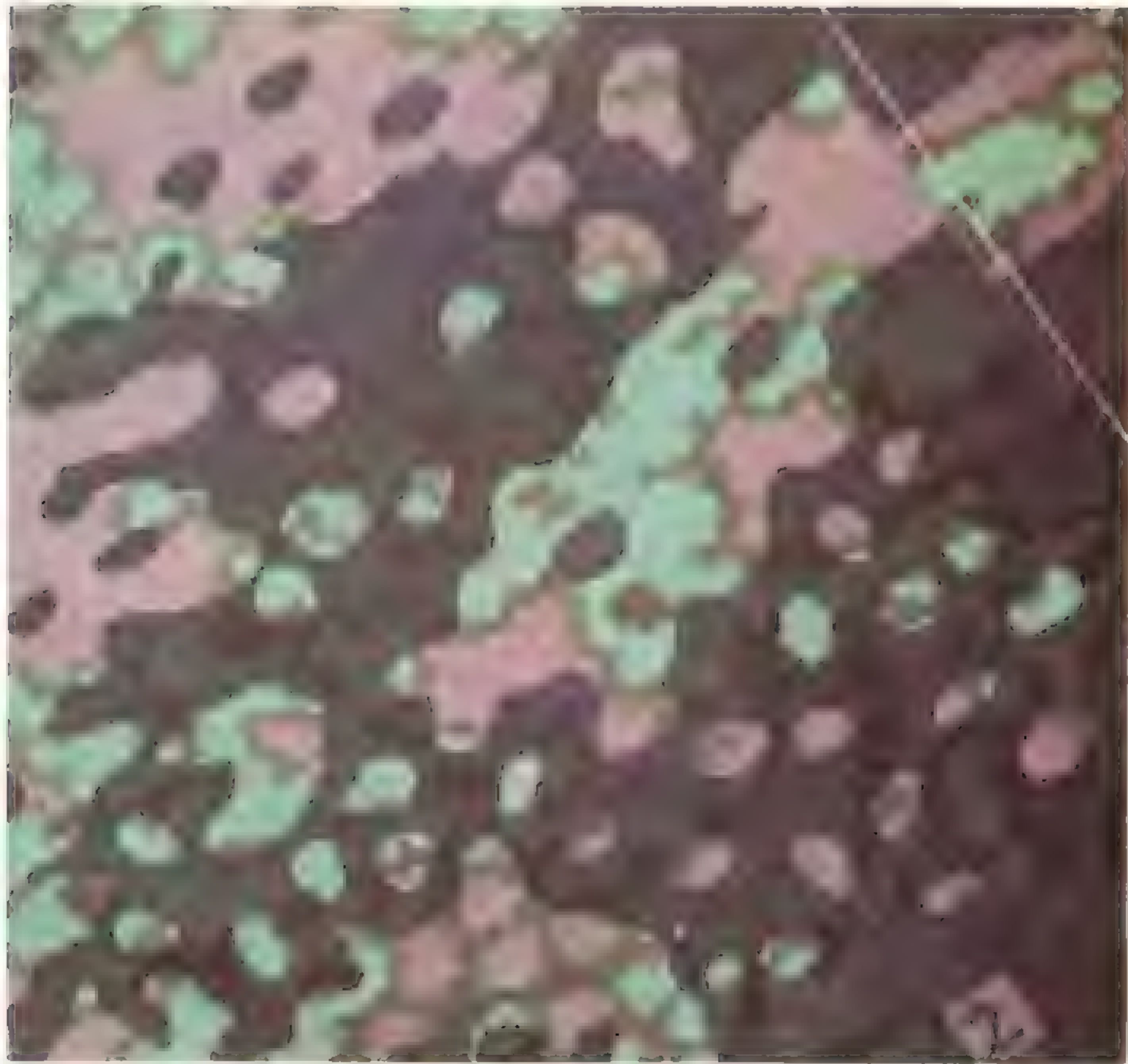


PLANE TREE 1 SUMMER EARLY



PLANE TREE 1 WINTER LATE





PLANE TREE 2 SUMMER LATE



PLANE TREE 2 SUMMER EARLY



PLANE TREE 3 SUMMER LATE



PLANE TREE 4 WINTER EARLY



PLANE TREE 5 EARLY



PLANE TREE 6 EARLY



# LAYOUT FOR FIELD BLOUSE

The same material is used as for ponchos and quartershelters, with the same reversible summer and winter patterns.

German Field Blouses were made of all types of camouflage, but one thing is interesting and that is that the palm and stroke pattern was never used for anything but field blouses and did not appear on quartershelters. The main reason for this was the pattern of the quartershelters was generally edged by a big paving stone black which was bad for deception, although this could be avoided in the making of field blouses, albeit at some cost in material loss. The manufacturing of the Field Blouses was very special, and one easy way to check the counterfeit article is to see how the pattern is balanced. It is impossible to make a blouse out of a quartershelter without a great deal of sewing. See the diagram for further details of construction.

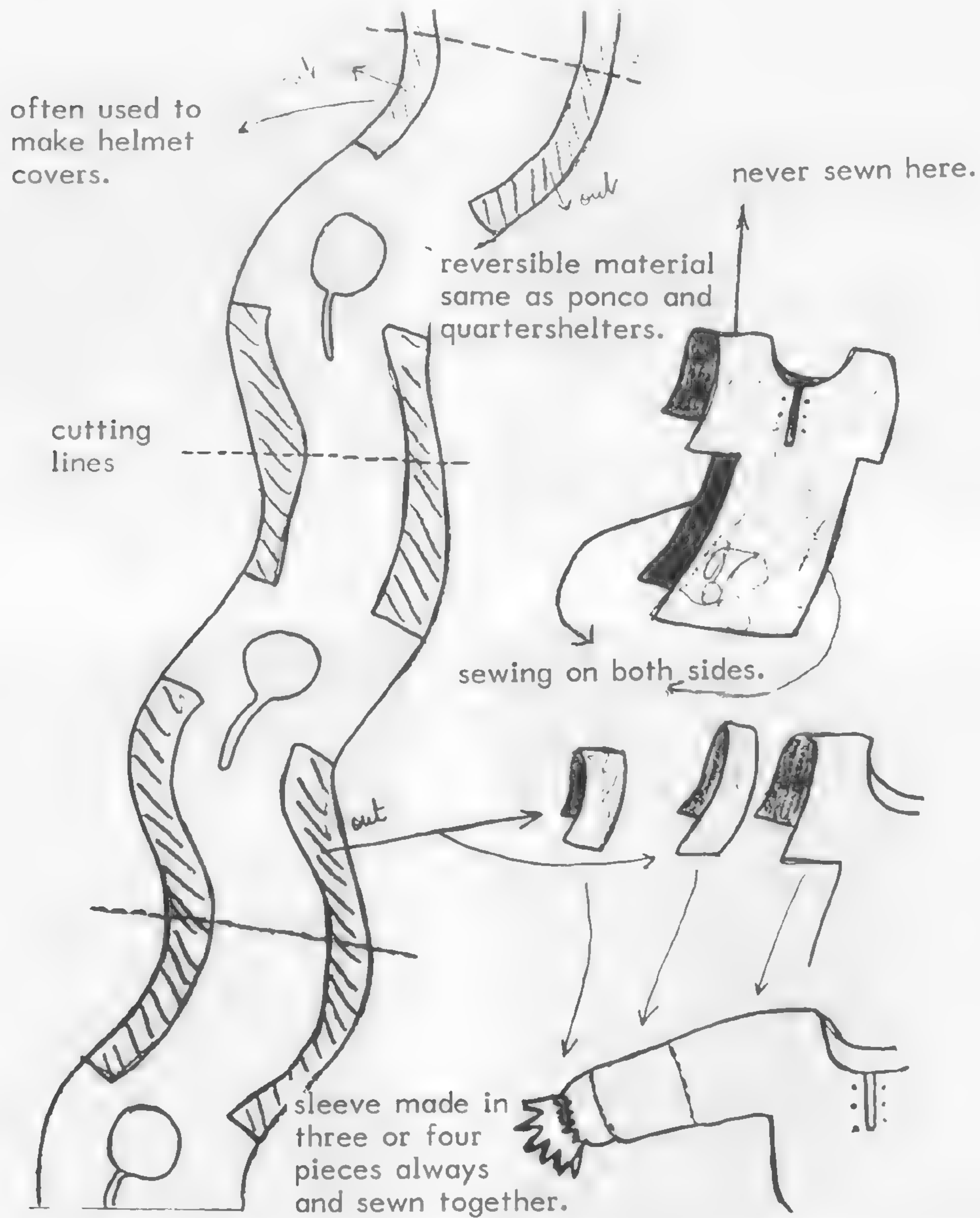






Photo 23. Plane Tree Pattern No 1. Overall suit for tank crew.



Photo 24. Plane Tree Pattern No 2. Summer side. Poncho.





Photo 25. Plane Tree Pattern. Two members of the Waffen SS wearing field blouses and camouflaged helmet covers. Note the elasticated cuffs. 4th S.S. Panzer Grenadier Div. Police.



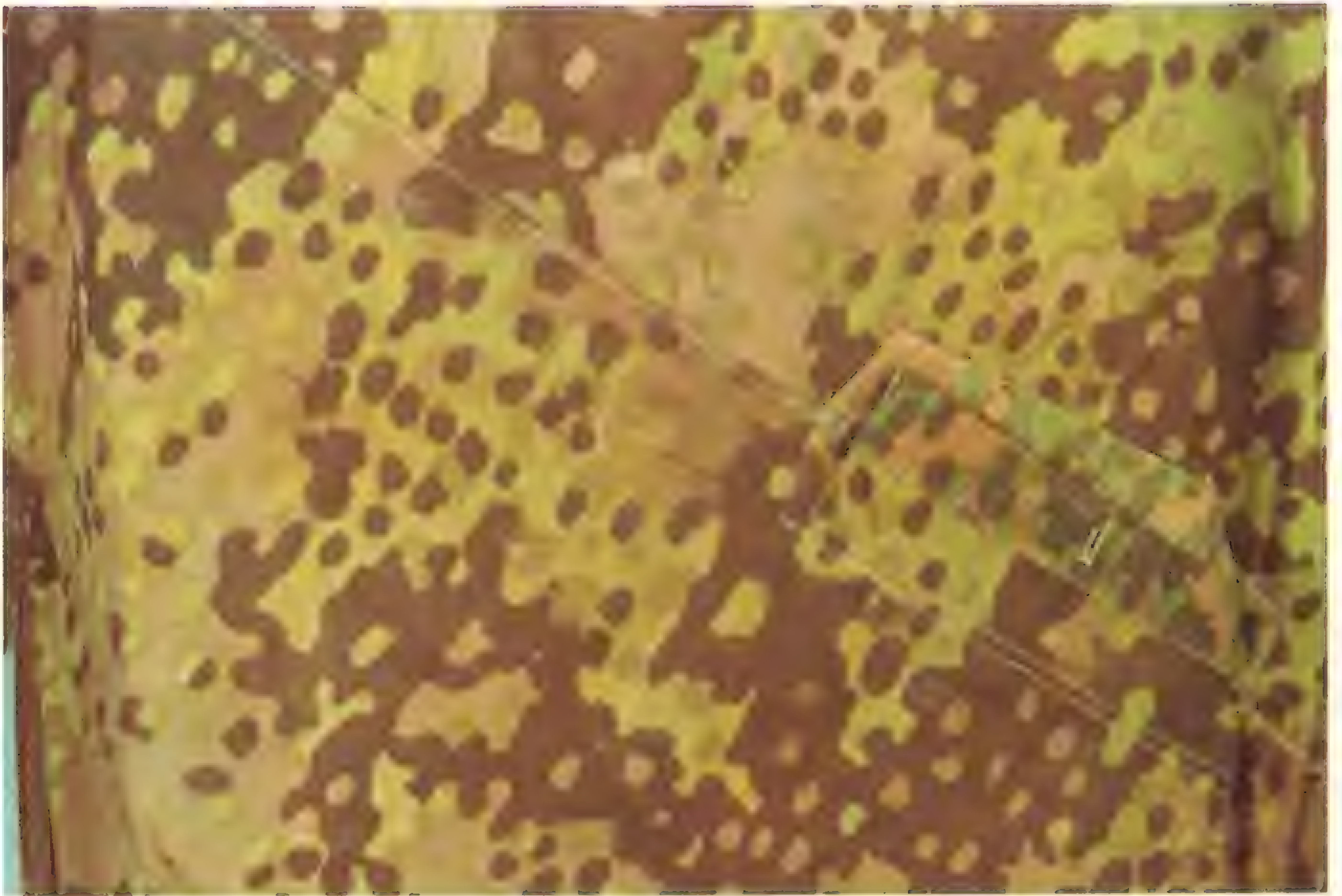


Photo 26. Plane Tree No.2 (Old Pattern). This is the older pattern without oak leaves in the background. Summer.

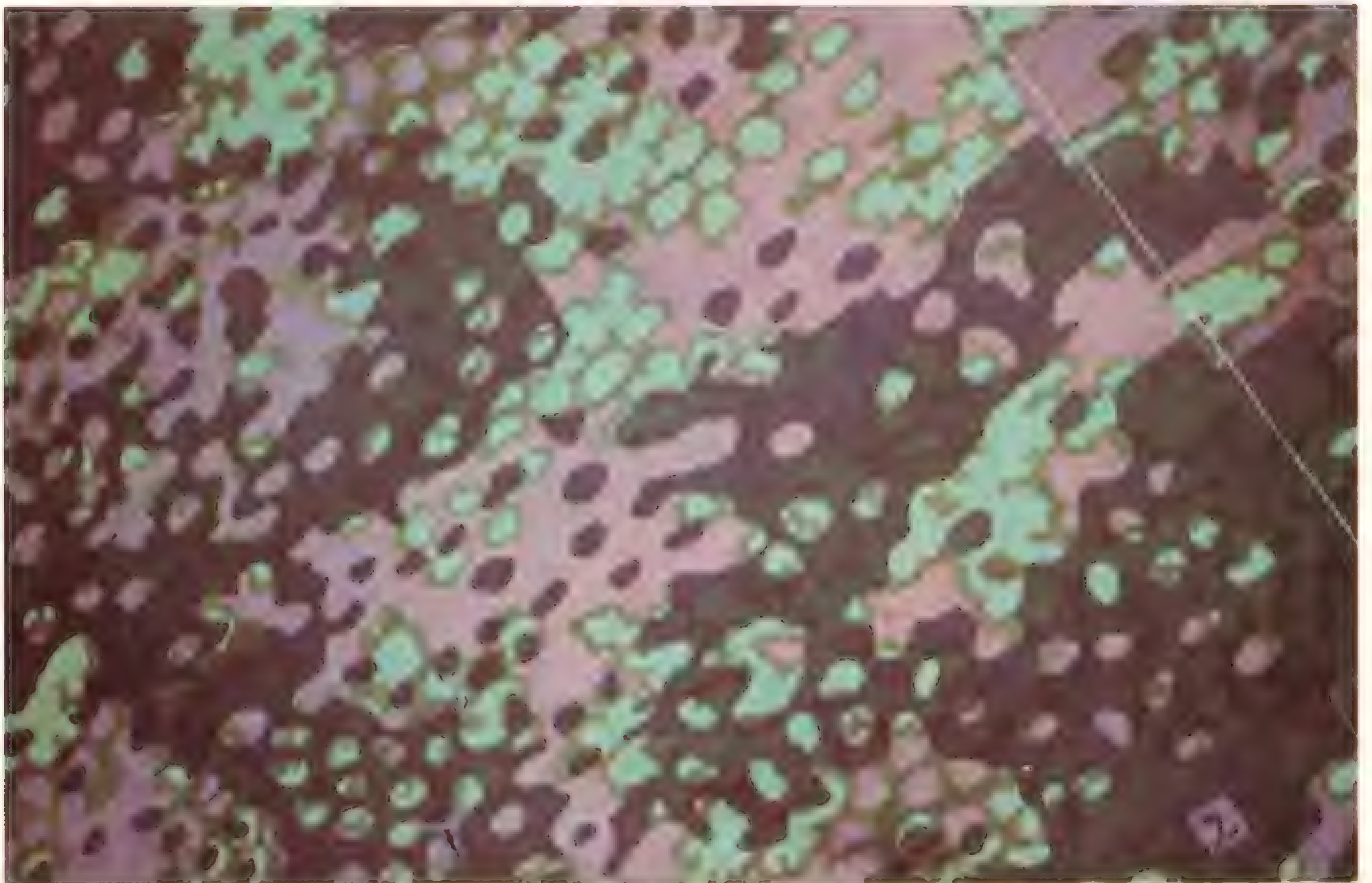


Photo 27. Plane Tree Pattern No 2 (Newer pattern). This is the later pattern with oak leaves in the background.





Photo 28. Plane Tree Pattern. Summer side. Excellent camouflage effect with tank crew coverall.





Photo 29. Plane Tree Pattern. An individual tent made up of three quarter shelters.



Photo 30. Plane Tree pattern. Note this pattern on the helmet cover and field blouse of this Waffen SS member using a range finder in Russia.



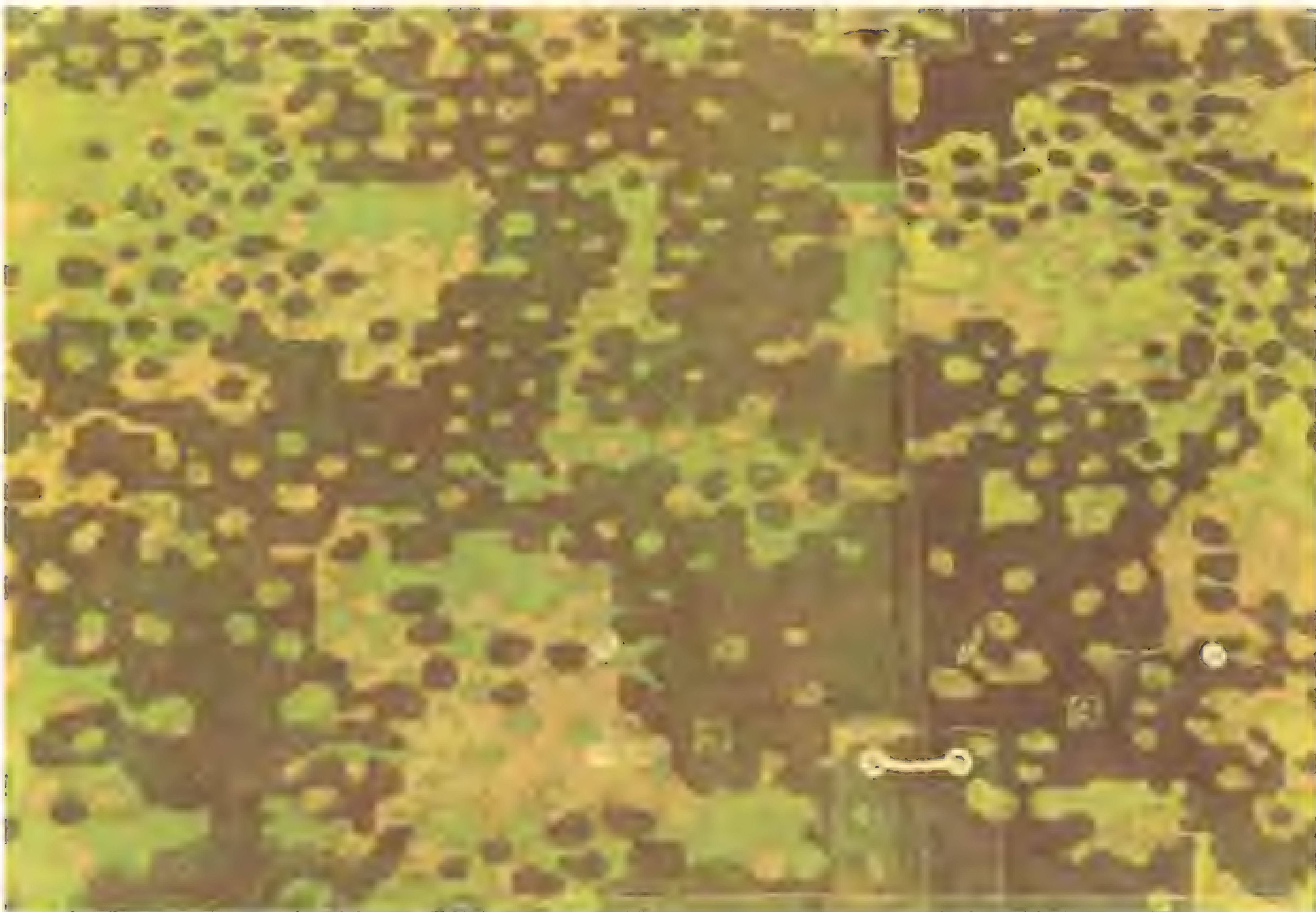


Photo 31. Plane Tree Pattern No 3. Summer side.



Photo 32. Plane Tree Pattern No 3. Winter side.





Photo 33. Plane Tree Pattern. Field Blouse, Autumn side.



Photo 34. Plane Tree Pattern. Poncho, Summer side. Fold in waterproof.





Photo 35. Plane Tree Pattern.  
Field Blouse. Summer side.





Photo 36 Plane Tree Pattern No 2 (Newer Pattern). This is the later pattern with Oak Leaves in the background.





Photo 37. Plane Tree Pattern.  
Wehrmacht officer wearing an SS Field Blouse.





Photo 38. Plane Tree Pattern No 5 (top). The SS Zeltbahn.  
Dimensions were the same (and markings) as the Wehrmacht Zeltbahn (photo 39) below.







Photo 40. Plane Tree Pattern.

A Waffen SS NCO wearing camouflaged field blouse in Russia gets his socks darned by Russian villagers. This was early in the campaign when the Germans were greeted as liberators.





Photo 41. Plane Tree Pattern No 5. This design has very few spots with large spaces in between.

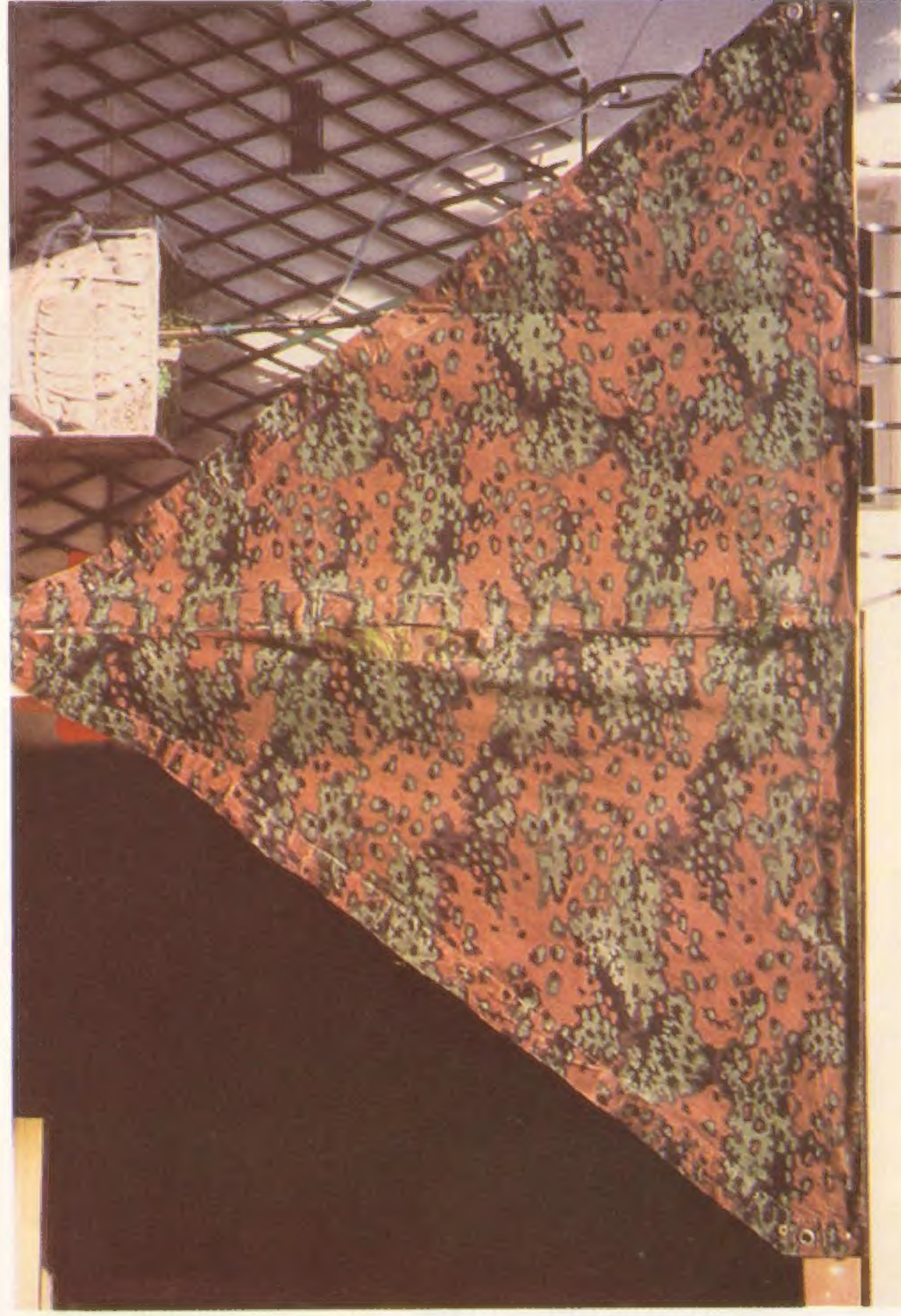


Photo 43. For comparison purposes Oak Leaf pattern A extended.



Photo 42. Oak Leaf Pattern B. Helmet Cover in summer colours.



Photo 44. Oak Leaf Pattern B. Helmet Cover in winter colours.





Photo 45. Plane Tree Pattern.  
Non-regulation Field Blouse (right)  
made of quartershelter material.

Photo 46. Plane Tree Pattern.  
Helmet Covers and Field Blouses worn  
by SS machine gun crew.





## CAMOUFLAGED UNIFORMS OF THE WAFFEN S.S.



# 2

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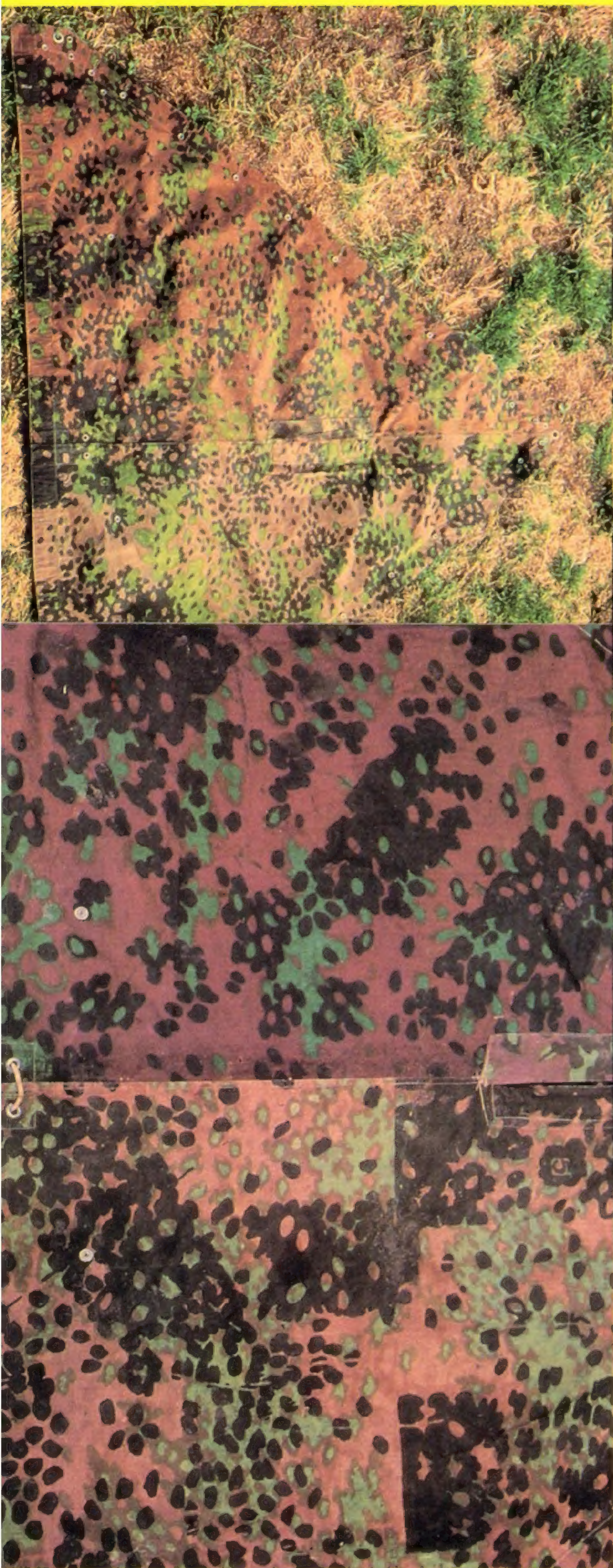
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